



Crossing Smith Sound. This is the sort of pleasant polar jaunting that enabled Dr. Cook to make his fabulous twelve miles a day in reaching the Pole.

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to swallow us up. The Eskimos were all sleeping soundly when I arose and got my oil stove going, but they were soon up, preparing the sledges for the advance.

Again we came upon open water and were compelled to turn a long distance out of our course to get around it. However, the ice was in the finest possible condition, and we were able to cover in this march twenty miles by the chart, though we halted once to kill seals, a number of which were to be seen on the ice, as we needed them badly for dog food. I succeeded in getting two and the Eskimos brought in five among them.

At length we reached the head of Flagler Fjord, and left the ice for the land. High winds had swept the rocks pretty clear of snow, and travelling became, therefore exceedingly bad. The country was very rough and we could see only a short distance ahead, but there seemed small prospect of improvement. There was so little snow, in fact, that it became evident that we should have to lighten our *komatiks* of every pound we could spare from our equipment, dispensing with everything not absolutely necessary to our existence, even at the expense of comparative comfort. A small amount of tea and sugar and twenty-five pounds of biscuits were retained. Among other things, my oil stoves and oil were cached, and beyond this point I used the Eskimos' stone lamps to do my cooking.

Here we encountered the hottest day of the season. The thermometer registered at one time fifty-eight degrees above zero, though later, when in camp as I wrote my journal, I noticed that it had dropped to six degrees above. Travelling in this high temperature was exceedingly uncomfortable. Perspiration ran into my eyes, already inflamed by the glare of sun and snow, and they became very painful. Okspuddyshou and Tukshu had delayed the use of smoked glasses too long, and were suffering a great deal of pain from snow blindness.

Hares were very plentiful in the valleys which we were ascending, and so tame that we could approach within a few yards of them. I shot several for food, though they were very poor. The skins, too, were in high demand by the Eskimos for socks.

While hunting hare with Etukishuk I came upon the heads of five large musk oxen which had been killed a long time ago, and also saw a great many old musk-ox tracks. One pair of horns was in fair preservation, and this I took with me, but the others had lain in the snow for so long a time they were valueless.

In spite of the many tracks that were seen here, I held to my purpose to push on to the country for which we had set out. Here the tracks were not of recent date, while in the farther country there was no question but that we should find an abundance of game. In fact, Eiseeyou assured me that we were now so close to it that after another "sleep" or two at most we should have musk oxen for dinner.

The difficult conditions of travelling compelled us to shorten our next march to eight hours. Men and dogs were exhausted. Our eyes were bloodshot, highly inflamed, and painful. The temperature had suddenly dropped, and when I attempted to sleep I suffered more from the cold than at any time since leaving Annootok. The moisture from our breath froze at once into crystals upon everything it touched.

The short march, the necessity of halting to rest the dogs, and our own weariness brought about by constant back-breaking lifting of *komatiks* over rough, rocky places made progress slower even than had been anticipated. But encouragement came in the increasing freshness of musk-ox signs, which gave promise that our ambition was soon to be realised.

Finally we turned into the bed of a very large river—a river when the weather was warm enough to make the water flow, but now a stretch of solid ice. I should say it was a mile and a half in width. On either side snow-covered mountains rose abruptly to lofty heights, with glaciers from the interior ice cap now and again pushing down through ravines.

Everywhere we were surrounded by frozen desolation. It would be difficult to imagine a more God-forsaken region, but withal it possessed a rugged, austere beauty, an impressive and inspiring grandeur. Here in the midst of this bleak, barren land came to me a day that shall remain a life memory—a day that brought full recompense for all the hardships and sufferings that I had endured in the Arctic.

We had halted to make camp after many hours of desperate struggle, when Eiseeyou called me to him and pointed to what appeared to be two large black rocks at the foot of a mountain, a half mile or so distant, and as he pointed, said laconically, "*Omingmong!*" (musk ox). All the Eskimos broke at once into an excited babble, and set to work with feverish haste to straighten out the dogs' traces preparatory to a long run at high speed.

I could make little of what they said, for it requires not one, but several years of constant resi-

dence among the Eskimos for a white man to obtain sufficient grasp of their language to understand a running conversation. But when I saw them remove their guns from their cases, I knew they were preparing for the chase and told them very forcibly that I must hold them to our agreement, that I alone should shoot all the musk ox and any bear seen upon the trip, unless I chose to give others the privilege, and this I did not propose to do, on the present occasion, at least.

They were very sulky at first, but finally replaced their guns in the cases. In great haste and confusion everything was made ready. Three of the Eskimos cut one dog loose from each of their teams, and these dashed away on the trail of the musk ox, putting new life into those attached to the light sledges, which, though the snow was soft and deep, took up the chase at a mad run. For a few hundred yards our speed was beyond belief. The dogs were wild for the hunt.

The three dogs that were first cut loose overtook the musk ox and attacked them by biting at their heels. When we had come within fifty yards of the animals, Eiseeyou cut his eight dogs loose, and the pack brought the game to bay. There was a large boulder rising above the snow, and both musk ox backed up against it and kept the dogs off with lowered heads and frequent charging, always backing up to the boulder to protect their rear.

They were the first musk ox of my experience and they were the most peculiar animals I had ever seen. Their long hair hung down and dragged in the snow, leaving a trail where they had walked on either side of their tracks. For a little while I watched their method of fighting the dogs, and then raised my rifle and gave each a shot behind the shoulder. I was very close to them when I fired and both animals were killed instantly.

I may say here that for either long or close shooting, the high-power small bore sporting rifle, carrying a good weight, soft-nosed, jacketed bullet, is, in my experience, the most effective and satisfactory weapon. I have done rapid shooting, always with killing effect, at many hundred yards, with such a weapon, and when big game is hit it cannot escape.

The instant the musk ox dropped, all of the dogs were on top of them and would have torn them to pieces had the Eskimos not driven them off with their whips. These were two very large old bulls, with magnificent heads, trophies alone worthy of my hard trip from Greenland.